

Community-based success in TB care

SLOVAKIA

EPW core priorities and flagships

Moving towards universal health coverage
Promoting health and well-being

WHO collaboration

Training and capacity-building
Partnership between the Regional Office and Country Office

Slovakia has faced persistent challenges in controlling TB, particularly among vulnerable populations. Despite being a low-incidence country, Slovakia grapples with screening and treating specific risk groups for TB, including Roma people, homeless individuals and those with comorbidities such as diabetes.

The Regional Office has been a crucial partner in Slovakia's fight against TB. The collaboration began in earnest in the early 2000s through the Roma Health Assistants programme. This initiative trained members of the Roma ethnic group to ensure that people affected by TB received proper care and follow-up in their communities. In recent years, support from the Regional Office has included technical advice, training materials, and trainings for health assistants on TB management and basic hygiene standards.

The impact

Through this partnership, Slovakia has achieved an 85% treatment success rate – among the highest in Europe. This is largely attributed to the effective work of Roma health assistants, who ensure that TB patients adhere to their treatment regimens and receive the necessary support. The integration of these assistants into the health-care system has also helped reduce the stigma associated with TB within the Roma community.

Lessons learned

- Involving community members as health assistants has been crucial for effective TB management.
- Regular training and retraining are essential for maintaining the quality of care and adapting to new challenges.
- Providing comprehensive support, including education on hygiene and assistance in understanding the health-care system, enhances treatment success.

Donors and partners

Ministry of Health; National Institute for TB, Lung Diseases and Thoracic Surgery



European Region



A laboratory technician tests for TB at a medical facility in Slovakia. © WHO

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“The success of our TB treatment is a testament to effective collaboration with partners and the dedication of our Roma health assistants.”

Professor Ivan Solovič, Deputy Director of the National Institute for TB, Lung Diseases and Thoracic Surgery, Slovakia

What's next?

Slovakia plans to expand its successful model to other marginalized groups and continue strengthening its TB control efforts. The focus will be on maintaining high treatment success rates and addressing new challenges, such as the influx of Ukrainian refugees. Continued collaboration with the Regional Office will provide vital technical support and coordinating efforts with neighbouring countries.